



Cal Poly Organic Farm

Community Supported Agriculture Newsletter

www.calpolyorgfarm.com

CPOF ANNOUNCEMENTS

* **THE CAL POLY ORGANIC FARM BREAD SHARE IS BACK!** This week all Monday shares can look forward to receiving a fresh, locally baked loaf of Whole Wheat Bread from Utopia European Bakery in San Luis Obispo. Thursday shares will receive a loaf of Rustic Bread from Skipping Stone Bakery in Paso Robles on Thursday, August 28th. The Bread Share will be available at the start of the Fall/Winter 2008/09 season, which begins September 22nd. Want to sign up for the Fall/Winter Bread Share? Just fill out the Bread Share Form attached to this e-mail and mail it along with payment to the Cal Poly Organic Farm. Enjoy!

* Founded in 1995, **Utopia European Bakery Cafe** describes itself as, "Dutch Territory since 2001." Utopia is renowned for its European pastries and bread, all baked fresh daily using only the finest ingredients. They also offer a wide variety of European specialty cakes, tarts, meringues, cheesecakes and other desserts, as well as breakfast and lunch daily.

The whole-wheat bread for the Monday shares is made from whole-wheat flour, bran, yeast, salt, sugar, gluten, vegetable shortening, and water. Utopia tries to use organic ingredients when possible, but the bread is not guaranteed to contain 100% certified organic ingredients.

Utopia European Bakery Cafe is located at 2900 Broad Street in San Luis Obispo. The bakery opens at 5 a.m. Monday-Saturday and 8 a.m. on Sunday. The Peets Coffee is fresh and ready when you are. For more information, call 544-8867 or go to <http://www.utopiabakery.com/index1.htm>

* All Thursday shares will receive a loaf of Rustic Bread from **Skipping Stone Bakery** in Paso Robles on Thursday, August 28th. The bio on Skipping Stone and ingredients for their loaf will be in the newsletter the week of August 25th.

* **The Cal Poly Fall/Winter CSA Season starts the week of September 22nd.** Spaces go fast, so sign up now to receive your 24- or 12-week share of fresh, local, organic produce! Membership forms avail. at: www.calpolyorgfarm.com, or call (805) 756-6139 for more information.

* Bob Banner, publisher and director of HopeDance, reminds us HopeDance's new Sept/Oct issue's deadline is August 10th. **The focus will be FOOD.** For information, go to <http://www.hopedance.org> or contact Mr. Banner at: info@hopedance.org

Week 19 Produce

August 10 – August 16, 2008

Full Shares expect 10-12 items

**Small Shares expect 8-10 items
from the following list:**

- * **Summer squash (CPOF and LeFort)** - The entire vegetable, including its flesh, seeds and skin, is edible.
- * **Cucumbers** - Varieties of cucumber are grown either to be eaten fresh or to be pickled.
- * **Head lettuce** - Place your favorite fillings in a lettuce leaf to make a breadless sandwich wrap.
- * **Peppers** - Sweet peppers can be frozen without first being blanched. It is better to freeze them whole since there will be less exposure to air which can degrade both their nutrient content and flavor.
- * **Potatoes** – Toss steamed, diced potato with olive oil and fresh herbs of your choice.
- * **Sweet onions (Growing Grounds)** – If cutting onions really makes you cry, consider wearing glasses or goggles.
- * **Eggplant (CPOF and LeFort)** – Add eggplant to your next Indian curry stir-fry.
- * **Whole wheat bread (Utopia Bakery/Conventional)** -
- * **Raspberries (7th Heaven)** – Raspberries are an excellent source of fiber, manganese and vitamin C.
- * **Parsley** – Combine chopped parsley with bulgur wheat, chopped green onions (scallions), mint leaves, lemon juice and olive oil to make the Middle Eastern classic dish, tabouli.
- * **Kale** – Kale should be wrapped in a damp paper towel, placed in a plastic bag and stored unwashed in the refrigerator crisper.
- * **Carrots** – Combine shredded carrots, beets and apples, and eat as a salad.
- * **Salad mix (CPOF)**

Unless otherwise noted, all vegetables are from the CPOF.
Unless otherwise noted, all vegetables are certified organic.

Save the Date: Sat. 9/20 from 2 p.m. to 10 p.m. for the 1st Annual Pozo Green Music Festival Featuring Michael Franti & Spearhead. The Pozo Green Music Festival will be a celebration to bring awareness to the green economy & alternative sources of energy.

- * **Questions about your membership? Looking for an old newsletter? Have you lost your CSA Calendar?** Find all this and more at: www.calpolyorgfarm.com.

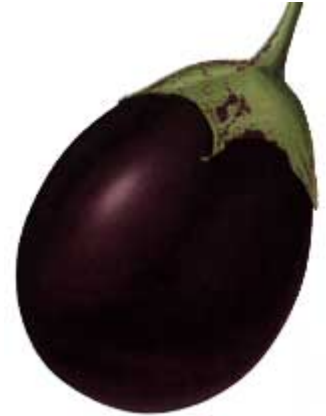
VEGETABLE OF THE WEEK: EGGPLANT

Eggplant, or *aubergine* as it is called in France, is a vegetable long prized for its beauty as well as its unique taste and texture. Eggplants belong to the plant family of *Solanaceae*, also commonly known as nightshades, and are kin to the tomato, bell pepper and potato. Eggplants grow in a manner much like tomatoes, hanging from the vines of a plant that grows several feet in height.

One of the most popular varieties of eggplant in North America looks like a pear-shaped egg, a characteristic from which its name is derived. The skin is glossy and deep purple in color, while the flesh is cream colored and spongy in consistency. Contained within the flesh are seeds arranged in a conical pattern.

In addition to this variety, eggplant is also available in a cornucopia of other colors including lavender, jade green, orange, and yellow-white, as well as in sizes and shapes that range from that of a small tomato to a large zucchini.

While the different varieties do vary slightly in taste and texture, one can generally describe the eggplant as having a pleasantly bitter taste and spongy texture. In many recipes, eggplant fulfills the role of being a complementary ingredient that balances the surrounding flavors of the other more pronounced ingredients.



History

The ancient ancestors of eggplant grew wild in India and were first cultivated in China in the 5th century B.C. Eggplant was introduced to Africa before the Middle Ages and then into Italy, the country with which it has long been associated, in the 14th century. It subsequently spread throughout Europe and the Middle East and, centuries later, was brought to the Western Hemisphere by European explorers. Today, Italy, Turkey, Egypt, China and Japan are the leading growers of eggplant.

Although it has a long and rich history, eggplant did not always hold the revered place in food culture that it does today, especially in European cuisines. As a result of the overly bitter taste of the early varieties, it seems that people also felt that it had a bitter disposition—eggplant held the undeserved and inauspicious reputation of being able to cause insanity, leprosy and cancer. For centuries after its introduction into Europe, eggplant was used more as a decorative garden plant than as a food. Not until new varieties were developed in the 18th century, did eggplant lose its bitter taste and bitter reputation, and take its now esteemed place in the cuisines of many European countries, including Italy, Greece, Turkey and France.

Selection and Storage

- * Choose eggplants that are firm and heavy for their size. Their skin should be smooth and shiny, and their color, whether it be purple, white or green, should be vivid. They should be free of discoloration, scars, and bruises, which usually indicate that the flesh beneath has become damaged and possibly decayed.
- * The stem and cap, on either end of the eggplant, should be bright green in color. As you would with other fruits and vegetables, avoid purchasing eggplant that has been waxed. To test for the ripeness of an eggplant, gently press the skin with the pad of your thumb. If it springs back, the eggplant is ripe, while if an indentation remains, it is not.
- * Although they look hardy, eggplants are actually very perishable and care should be taken in their storage. Eggplants are sensitive to both heat and cold and should ideally be stored at around 50 degrees Fahrenheit (10 degrees Celsius). Do not cut eggplant before you store it as it perishes quickly once its skin has been punctured or its inner flesh exposed.
- * Place uncut and unwashed eggplant in a plastic bag and store in the refrigerator crisper where it will keep for a few days. If it is too large for the crisper, do not try to force it in; this will damage the skin and cause the eggplant to spoil and decay. Instead, place it on a shelf within the refrigerator.
- * If you purchase eggplant that is wrapped in plastic film, remove it as soon as possible since it will inhibit the eggplant from breathing and degrade its freshness.

Health Benefits

Eggplant is a very good source of dietary fiber, potassium, manganese, copper and thiamin (vitamin B1). It is also a good source of vitamin B6, folate, magnesium and niacin. Eggplant also contains phytonutrients such as nasunin and chlorogenic acid.

Preparation Tips

- * When cutting an eggplant, use a stainless steel knife as carbon steel will react with its phytonutrients and cause it to turn black. Wash the eggplant first and then cut off the ends.
- * Most eggplants can be eaten either with or without their skin. However, the larger ones and those that are white in color generally have tough skins that may not be palatable. To remove skin, you can peel it before cutting or if you are baking it, you can scoop out the flesh once it is cooked. Eggplant is best cut shortly before cooking. Once peeled, eggplant flesh turns brown or oxidizes quickly. Cook it soon after peeling or brush it with lemon juice.
- * Leaving the peel on increases its fiber content. However, the larger deep purple eggplants sometimes have a bitter skin along with a thin layer of bitter flesh just under the skin. Lengthy cooking, about 20 to 30 minutes, usually tames the bitterness.
- * To tenderize the flesh's texture and reduce some of its naturally occurring bitter taste, you can sweat the eggplant by salting it. After cutting the eggplant into the desired size and shape, sprinkle it with salt and allow it to rest for about 30 minutes. This process will pull out some of its water content and make it less permeable to absorbing any oil used in cooking. Rinsing the eggplant after "sweating" will remove most of the salt.
- * Eggplant can be baked, roasted in the oven, or steamed. If baking it whole, pierce the eggplant several times with a fork to make small holes for the steam to escape. Bake at 350 degrees Fahrenheit (about 177 degrees Celsius) for 15 to 25 minutes, depending upon size. You can test for its readiness by gently inserting a knife or fork to see if it passes through easily.
- * Because the flesh of the eggplant is so porous, it has a tendency to absorb oil quickly. Avoid dipping slices into oil or they will absorb enormous quantities. Instead, brush on a light coating of oil just before cooking. To prevent overuse of oil when sautéing eggplant, add a little water to the pan along with the oil. Salting the eggplant before cooking may also prevent it from absorbing excess oil.

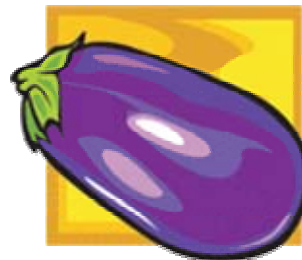


A Few Quick Serving Ideas:

- * **Roasted or Grilled:** Traditional preparation throughout the Middle East is to roast the whole eggplant over a gas flame or barbecue grill, turning with tongs, until soft and blackened to give it a definitive smoky flavor. Prepare an Eggplant Caviar appetizer by cooking a large whole eggplant over gas flames, turning frequently until soft and well blackened. Cool, scoop out flesh, and season with lots of chopped onions, salt, pepper, lemon juice, and a little olive oil. For more expressive caviar, add garlic, olives, or tomato paste.
- * **Sautéed:** Another great starter is Caponata, a traditional Italian appetizer. Chop a whole-unpeeled eggplant into bite-size cubes, and sauté them in olive oil with onions and green bell peppers until soft. Add fresh tomatoes, chopped green olives, capers, and a little wine vinegar. Season to taste with salt and a pinch of sugar. Sliced eggplant can be dipped in a breading mixture and sautéed in oil, then drained on paper towels to absorb excess oil.
- * **Oven Roasted:** Enjoy an Eggplant Sandwich that suits your palate. For a lean meal, slice a plump eggplant crosswise into thick slices, and roast it on a lightly oiled baking sheet at 375 F. (Gas Mark 5) for 25 minutes. Slip it into a whole-wheat pita with sliced tomatoes, sweet onions, romaine lettuce, and your favorite condiments. For a more lavish treat, fry the eggplant slices in olive oil until tender and spread your pita or bread with vegan mayonnaise or an olive tapanade. Add your favorite fixings like lettuce and tomato and enjoy.
- * **Baked:** Baked eggplant is an easy cooking method that requires practically no effort. Prior to baking, be sure to pierce the eggplant in several places with a fork to prevent it from exploding in the oven. Bake at 350 F. to 375 F. (Gas Mark 4 to 5) for about an hour. When cool enough to handle, scoop out the flesh and season to taste.
- * **Braised:** Prepare a delicious Ratatouille, a well-known French vegetable stew, by sautéing eggplant chunks along with zucchini, tomatoes, onions, and garlic in olive oil. Add tomato juice and traditional herbs and seasonings, cover the pan, and allow it to simmer about 20 minutes.
- * **Broiling or Grilling:** Slice eggplants thickly, brush with oil, and place under the broiler or directly on the barbecue grill. Watch them carefully to avoid burning. Cooking will be brief, probably no more than 5 minutes on each side. Season as desired.

1/3 cup cornstarch
1 large egg
1/2 teaspoon coarse salt plus additional for sprinkling the eggplant
1 cup fresh bread crumbs
1 small eggplant (about 1/4 pound), cut crosswise into 1/4-inch-thick slices
vegetable oil for deep-frying
lemon wedges if desired

Crisp Fried Eggplant



1. Put the cornstarch, the egg beaten with 1/2 teaspoon of the salt, and the breadcrumbs in separate small dishes. Dredge each eggplant slice in the cornstarch, coating it thoroughly and shaking off the excess, coat it with the egg mixture, and dredge it in the bread crumbs, pressing on the crumbs to make them adhere.
2. Transfer the eggplant as it is coated to paper towels and let it dry slightly.
3. In a deep heavy skillet fry the eggplant slices in batches in 1/2 inch of 375°F. oil for 1 minute on each side, or until they are golden brown, and transfer them with tongs to paper towels to drain. Sprinkle the eggplant lightly with the additional salt and serve it with the lemon wedges. *Serves 2 as a side dish or first course.*

Grilled Eggplant - *Melanzane alla Griglia*

6 small tender eggplants, about a pound (450 g) in all
 2 cloves garlic, finely minced
 A medium bunch parsley, minced
 1/4 cup olive oil or more, to taste
 A fresh hot pepper, seeded, ribbed and shredded (optional)
 Salt & pepper to taste

1. Wash and dry the eggplant and cut it into 1/4-inch thick slices. Sprinkle the slices with salt and put them in a colander for an hour, then rinse them well and pat them dry. While they're sitting combine the remaining ingredients to form the marinade and put it in a broad serving dish.
2. Lightly score the slices of eggplant in a crosshatch pattern and marinate them for about 20 minutes. Then grill them for about 10 minutes or until done, turning them a couple of times, and return them to the serving dish. Spoon the marinade in the dish over them and they're ready for use, though they will improve if they sit for a couple of hours. *Serves 4.*

Eggplant Bruschette

1 baguette
 4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
 1 1/2 garlic cloves, whole clove left unpeeled
 1 small eggplant (1/2 lb)
 1/2 teaspoon finely chopped fresh thyme
 1/4 teaspoon finely chopped fresh rosemary
 1/4 teaspoon finely chopped fresh oregano
 1/4 teaspoon coarse gray sea salt
 1/8 teaspoon coarsely ground black pepper
 1 tablespoon chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
 2 tablespoons finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano

1. Put oven rack in middle position and preheat oven to 375°F.
2. Cut off and discard 1 end of baguette, then cut 12 (1/4-inch-thick) crosswise slices from baguette (reserve remainder for another use). Lightly brush 1 side of each slice with some oil (about 1 tablespoon total) and arrange, oiled sides up, on a baking sheet. Toast until golden, 8 to 10 minutes. While toasts are still warm, rub oiled sides with cut side of garlic clove half, then transfer to a rack to cool. Reduce oven temperature to 350°F.
3. Halve eggplant lengthwise and make shallow 1/2-inch-long incisions all over cut sides with tip of a paring knife. Arrange eggplant, cut sides up (without crowding), in a shallow baking dish and add unpeeled garlic clove. Sprinkle thyme, rosemary, oregano, sea salt, and pepper over eggplant, then drizzle eggplant and garlic with 2 tablespoons oil.
4. Bake until garlic is very tender, 30 to 35 minutes, then transfer garlic to a cutting board and continue to bake eggplant until very tender, 20 to 25 minutes more. When garlic is cool enough to handle, squeeze flesh from peel onto cutting board.
5. Transfer eggplant to cutting board and let stand until cool enough to handle, about 15 minutes. Scrape out flesh with a spoon onto cutting board, discarding peel. Finely chop eggplant and garlic together and transfer to a bowl. Add parsley and remaining tablespoon oil, then stir until combined well. Season with sea salt and pepper to taste.
6. Top toasts with eggplant mixture and sprinkle with cheese.

Pasta and Eggplant Parmesan - *Parmigiana di Paste e Melanzane Grigliate*

8 ounces mezze maniche, rigatoni or similar thick walled tubular pasta
 2 pounds eggplant
 2 pounds canned chopped tomatoes
 8 ounces Mozzarella, diced
 1 cup freshly grated Parmigiano
 2 eggs
 A small onion
 A small bunch of basil

Oregano
Olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste

1. Trim the ends of the eggplant, wash them, cut them lengthwise into 1/4-inch (1/2 cm) slices, and grill them on a cast-iron griddle, turning them once.
2. Put the eggs in cold water to cover, boil them for 10 minutes, and run them under cold water to cool them, peel them, and slice them.
3. Peel and mince the onion. Sauté it in 2 tablespoons of olive oil for a few minutes, until it becomes translucent. Add the tomatoes, a pinch of oregano, and salt and pepper to taste; simmer the mixture for 15-20 minutes. When you turn off the flame, mince the basil and stir it into the sauce.
4. In the meantime bring pasta water to a boil, salt it, and boil the pasta. Drain it when it reaches the al dente stage, and season it with half the sauce.
5. At this point preheat your oven to 360° F. Take an oven dish large enough to hold all the ingredients and sprinkle some of the tomato sauce over it. Follow the sauce with a layer of sliced eggplant, followed by pasta, hard-boiled eggs, mozzarella, grated Parmigiano, and a little more sauce. Repeat with a layer of eggplant and continue until all is used up. Drizzle a little olive oil over the dish and bake it for a half hour. Serve it either hot or cold.

Walnut Stuffed Eggplant

2 1-pound eggplants
1/2 pound tomatoes, chopped
1/4 pound cremini or button mushrooms, sliced
1 cup chopped onions
4 large cloves garlic, minced
2 teaspoons extra virgin olive oil
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
Freshly ground black pepper
2/3 cup walnuts
1 6-ounce can tomato paste
3 heaping tablespoons capers, well drained
2 to 3 small ripe tomatoes, sliced
salt

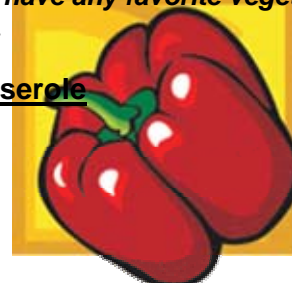


1. Cut the eggplants in half lengthwise, slicing through the stem end. Using a curved, serrated grapefruit knife, scoop out the flesh, leaving a 1/4-inch (.5 cm) thick shell, and coarsely chop the flesh. Put the chopped eggplant into a large, deep skillet or flat bottom wok.
2. Rub the inside of the eggplant shells with a small amount of olive oil and place them on a baking sheet. Place the eggplant shells under the broiler and broil them 3 inches (7.5 cm) from the heat source for 5 to 10 minutes, until fork tender. Watch carefully to prevent burning. Remove the eggplant shells from the broiler and set them aside.
3. Preheat the oven to 375°F.
4. Add the chopped tomatoes, mushrooms, onions, garlic, olive oil, salt, cinnamon, and pepper to the skillet with the chopped eggplant, and cook and stir for 7 to 10 minutes, until the vegetables are tender.
5. Coarsely grind the walnuts in a nutmill and add them to the skillet along with the tomato paste and capers. Mix well.
6. Fill the eggplant shells with the vegetable mixture and top with tomato slices. Sprinkle with salt and pepper, and bake, uncovered, for 25 to 35 minutes. *Yield: 4 hearty servings.*

* **Many thanks to CPOF Volunteer Wendy who tried the following recipes using her CPOF veggies, found them to be fabulous, and decided to share them with all of us. Do you have any favorite vegetable recipes to contribute to the newsletter? Send them to: orgfarm@calpoly.edu.**

Sweet Italian Sausage Casserole

2 tablespoons margarine
2 tablespoons olive oil
8 ounces sweet Italian sausage, casings removed
1 cup diced (1/2-inch) eggplant
1 cup diced (1/2-inch) zucchini
1 cup diced (1/2-inch) red or green bell pepper
1/4 cup chopped onion
2 cloves of garlic, minced
1 can (28 ounces) Italian plum tomatoes, drained and chopped



2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil leaves
Cayenne or black pepper, to taste
2 ounces grated mozzarella cheese

1. Melt the margarine with the oil in a nonstick pan over medium-low heat. Add the sausage meat and cook for 10 minutes, breaking up the meat with a spoon. Remove to a bowl with a slotted spoon; reserve.
2. To the same pot, add the eggplant, zucchini, bell pepper, onion and garlic. Stirring occasionally, cook until softened, about 10 to 15 minutes. Stir in the reserved sausage, the tomatoes, parsley, basil and cayenne. Reduce the heat and simmer for 15 minutes.
3. Spoon the mixture into an 8x9-inch, oven-to-table baking dish to fit and sprinkle with the mozzarella cheese. Bake in a 350°F preheated oven until the cheese melts, about 15 to 20 minutes. *Makes 4 servings.*

Halibut in Thai Curry Sauce over Fresh Corn Polenta

4 cups water
3/4 teaspoon salt
1 cup polenta
2 ears corn, kernels removed (2 tablespoons reserved for curry below)
2 tablespoons butter
1 to 3 teaspoons red curry paste, or to taste
1 can (15 ounce) coconut milk
1/4 cup fresh basil, chopped
3 tablespoons fish sauce
2 tablespoons brown sugar
2/3 cup chicken or vegetable stock
2 tablespoons fresh limejuice
2 medium zucchini, chopped
2 medium red bell pepper, chopped
8 ounces cremini mushrooms
2 tablespoons corn kernels, (reserved from above)
1 1/4 pounds halibut, skinned and cut into 4 pieces

1. Fresh Corn Polenta: In a heavy medium saucepan, bring four cups salted water to a boil. Slowly add polenta and whisk continuously for one minute. Reduce heat to low, cover and simmer 20 minutes, stirring periodically. Add corn kernels to polenta and cook 5 more minutes. Remove from heat, add butter, and mix well.
2. Coconut Red Curry Sauce: While polenta cooks, combine curry paste with coconut milk in a large heavy skillet and simmer on medium low heat for 5 minutes.
3. Add basil, fish sauce, brown sugar, stock, limejuice, reserved corn kernels and chopped vegetables. Simmer for 4 more minutes.
4. Add halibut and simmer, covered, for 10 more minutes or until halibut is opaque and cooked through, flipping once. Set aside and keep warm. Serve halibut over polenta with curry sauce ladled on top. *Serves 4.*

Eggplant, Tomato and Goat Cheese Sandwiches

1 1/2 cups chopped seeded tomatoes
1/4 cup chopped fresh basil
2 teaspoons red wine vinegar
1 large eggplant, cut lengthwise into 1/2-inch-thick slices
Olive oil
6 large 1/2-inch-thick slices country-style French bread
9 ounces soft mild goat cheese (such as Montrachet)

1. Combine chopped tomatoes, chopped fresh basil and red wine vinegar in small bowl. Season mixture to taste with salt and pepper. Set aside.
2. Prepare barbecue (medium-high heat) or preheat broiler. Brush 6 largest eggplant slices lightly with olive oil (reserve remaining eggplant for another use.) Brush bread lightly with olive oil. Grill eggplant and bread until golden, about 4 minutes per side for eggplant and 2 minutes per side for bread.
3. Arrange bread slices on plates. Spread goat cheese over, dividing evenly. Top with eggplant slices. Season with salt and pepper. Using slotted spoon, mound tomato mixture on eggplant, spread to cover and serve. *Make 6.*